

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-11, 34, and 37-39.

Please amend Claims 12, 13 and 23 as set forth below.

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method for making a flexible membrane having a polymeric matrix and a particulate material immobilized within said matrix, said method comprising:

providing a support having a first substantially flat surface and a second substantially flat surface;

combining at least a polymeric material and a selected quantity of particulate material to form a blend;

applying a substantially uniform thickness of said blend to each of said surfaces[.]; and

advancing said support with said blend applied thereon into at least one treatment bath at a rate of approximately 1-4ft./min.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 12 wherein said polymer solution comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of ~~polyurethane,~~ polyurethane, polyvinylidene fluoride, cellulose acetate and polyvinyl chloride.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said polymer is hydrophobic.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 12 comprising selectively distributing said particulate material within said membrane.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said membrane comprises between 5% and 30% of said polymer and 70-95% of particulate.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said membrane comprises at least 50% by weight of said particulate material.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 12 comprising dissolving said polymer in an organic solvent to provide said polymer solution prior to combining said polymer solution with said particulate material.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further comprising contacting said support with a liquid that is a non-solvent for said polymeric material by immersing said support in a bath of said liquid for a selected period of time after said applying step.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said blend is applied to a continuously moving sheet of said support.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein said support is alternately immersed in and removed from said water bath.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 21 further comprising drying said membrane.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 12 comprising drying said membrane for at least 10 minutes at 50° C.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 12, 14 or 23 further comprising treating said membrane with a wetting agent or hydrophilizing coating agent.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said agent comprises between 0.20% and 1% polyvinyl alcohol.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said agent comprises glycerol.

27. (Original) The method of Claim 24 wherein said agent comprises sodium chloride.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 24 further comprising drying said membrane after said treating.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 27 wherein said agent comprises a 0.9% sodium chloride.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further comprising introducing said support and said blend into a housing wherein said blend is applied to the surfaces of said support.

31. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further comprising contouring said membrane into a pleated sheet.

32. (Original) The method of Claim 12 further comprising contouring said membrane into a rippled sheet.

33. (Original) The method of Claim 30 comprising substantially excluding particles of said particulate material having a diameter greater than about 20 μ M.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said polymeric material comprises either a) at least two polymers or b) at least two copolymers or c) at least a polymer and copolymer.

36. (Original) The method of Claim 22 further comprising cutting said membrane to a desired size and sealing at least one edge of said membrane.

37-39 (Canceled)